SAN PABLO AVENUE, WEST BERKELEY

Typology: Large Neighborhood Corridor
Location: Berkeley, Alameda County
Size: The district is a half-mile (5 blocks) long corridor covering approximately 20 acres.

Sidewalk displays create an interesting pedestrian environment.

A. District Boundaries and Location

The San Pablo Avenue pedestrian district is located in Berkeley, approximately three-quarters of a mile east of Interstate 80 (I-80) and the San Francisco Bay. The district extends along San Pablo Avenue between University Avenue and Channing Way. Single family residential uses and some multi-family housing surround the corridor.

The San Pablo Avenue Pedestrian District is indicative of the Large Neighborhood Corridor typology in that the pedestrian district exists primarily along the corridor; little pedestrian activity extends into the surrounding neighborhoods.

B. District Overview

Figure 3-6 provides an overview of the district, including district boundaries, primary paths of pedestrian travel, the location of major attractors in the district and transit stops as discussed in more detail below.

I. Built Environment

A variety of independent retailers and service-based industries occupy the ground floors of one- to two-story buildings of varying architectural style. This eclectic district is home to a mix of uses that have traditionally been deemed incompatible; i.e., boutique retailers are located next to auto repair shops, restaurants, discounters, nurseries, convenience stores and rental yards. However, it is precisely this mix of day-to-day essentials and specialty shops

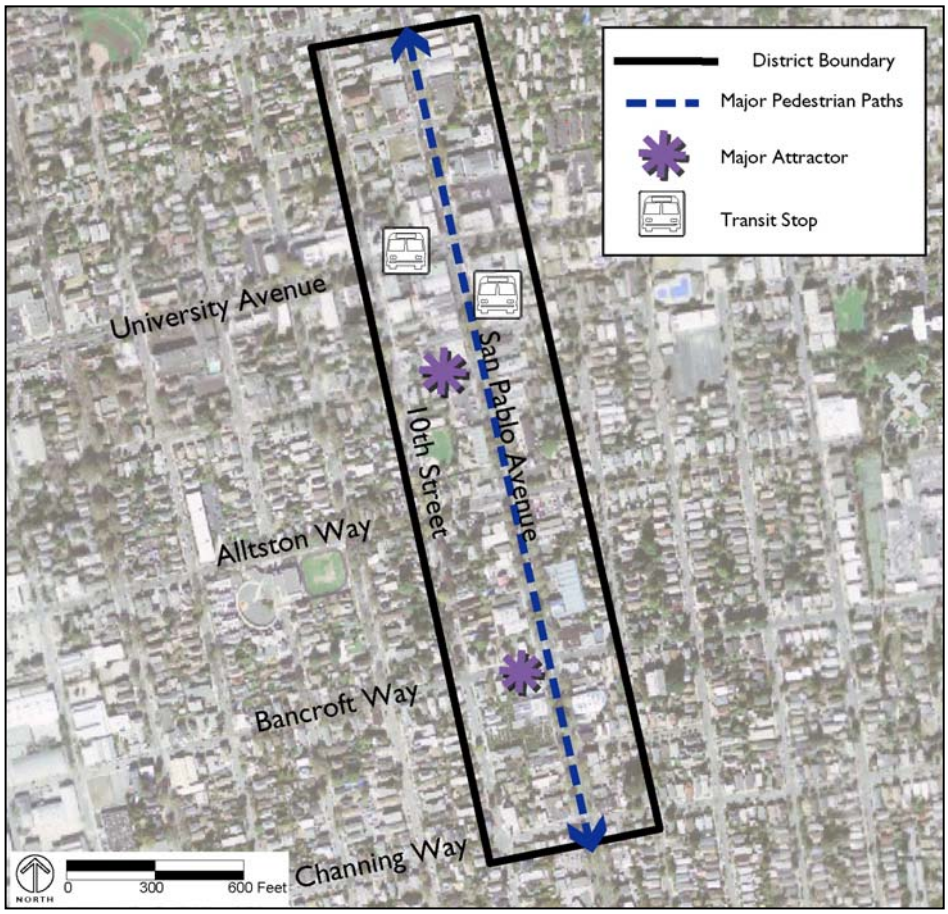


Figure 3-6: San Pablo Pedestrian District

that draws local pedestrian traffic from nearby residences as well as regional traffic to the district.

2. Major Attractors

The major attractor in the district is the mix of retail and service businesses located on San Pablo Avenue. Local residents are drawn from the surrounding neighborhoods and other parts of Berkeley to the post office, restaurants, nurseries and other daily necessities, as well as bus stops located on San Pablo

and University Avenues. Specialty retailers and boutiques, restaurants and auto service shops draw regional traffic to the district.

3. Transit Service

Transit in the district is provided by AC Transit bus service. Bus stops are located at the San Pablo Avenue/University Avenue intersection. Three local bus lines serve San Pablo Avenue with headways ranging from 7 to 30 minutes. Line 72R is AC Transit's Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) line, which provides daily regional service from 6:00 am to 8:00 pm. BRT headways are every 12 minutes at stops spaced two-thirds of a mile apart.

Five additional AC Transit bus lines operate on University Avenue with headways ranging between 15 to 30 minutes**.** These east-west lines provide access to BART at the Downtown Berkeley BART Station and the University of California, among other destinations.

4. Pedestrian Paths of Travel

San Pablo Avenue, a regional arterial corridor, is also the primary pedestrian path in the district. Pedestrian activity occurs throughout the day. Spikes of activity occur during work and school commute periods and on weekends. Many people drive to the district and park, then walk between the different retail uses and services available along the street. Some pedestrian activity results from people walking to the district from surrounding housing.

A b*us rapid transit (BRT) stop in the district. BRT attributes include:*

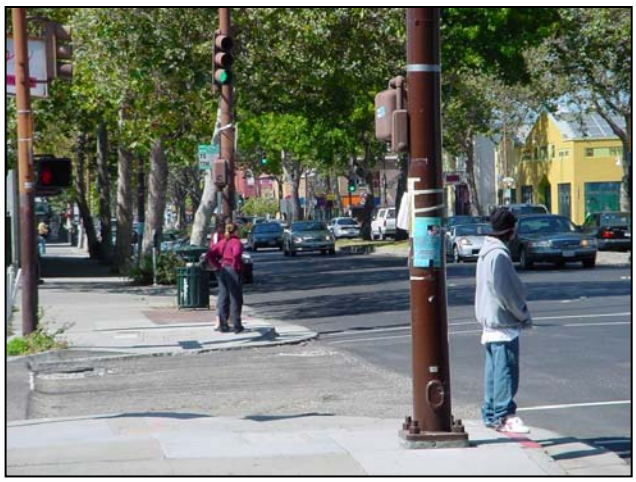
- *New low floor, multiple door buses to expedite boarding and alighting*
- *BRT logo and branding on all buses and shelters to maximize visibility of this service*
- *Limited number of stops to reduce overall travel time*
- *Far-side stops with traffic signal priority to reduce intersection delays*
- *The traffic signal priority is headway based and utilizes the Opticom detection system*
- *Queue bypass lanes allow buses to bypass extensive intersection traffic*
- *Bus arrival information at all BRT stops to further enhance overall perception of system reliability*

C. Planning History

West Berkeley is considered to be a unique urban environment in the Bay Area. Its built environment encompasses a wide range of building and site types, from massive heavy industries to single-family homes on small lots. A wide range of architectural styles exist as a result of the continuous process of

building and rebuilding from its inception in the late 1800's to today. As discussed in more detail below, the larger area was part of a lengthy planning process that resulted in the 1993 *West Berkeley Plan*. Although this plan focused largely on the allowable mix of uses in the West Berkeley area, with an emphasis on preserving industrial uses, it also called for creating a pedestrian area along San Pablo Avenue near University Avenue.

San Pablo Avenue (State Route 123) is a north-south four-lane arterial boulevard with a median strip that extends through West Berkeley and the East Bay. It is the former US Interstate 40, which was the main north-south route through the East Bay prior to the construction of I-80 (the East Shore Freeway). When it was first constructed, San Pablo Avenue was designated Business US 40. The designation was removed in 1960's when I-80 opened. However, the route is still considered as an I-80 reliever route. As a State Route, the right-of-way is owned and operated by Caltrans, which limits the ability of local authorities to carry out many improvement activities.



Pedestrian signals and median refuge islands help pedestrians cross San Pablo Avenue, a regional arterial corridor.

However, due to a significant public interest and a series of design studies up and down the corridor, Caltrans is in the final stages of implementing a Roadway Rehabilitation Project on San Pablo Avenue. The project includes pavement replacement, driveway reconstruction, sidewalk repairs, new curb ramps and curb and gutter drainage systems, improved signage and signal and lighting standards, and improved ADA access and bus stop foundations.

D. Regulatory Framework

The Berkeley General Plan, Zoning Ordinance and 1993 West Berkeley Plan address development in West Berkeley and within the San Pablo Avenue pedestrian district. The area is identified as a commercial node in the General Plan, which is defined as "a commercial area small enough for people to comfortably walk around in."

The 1993 West Berkeley Plan calls for preserving and enhancing San Pablo Avenue as a vital commercial corridor. It also calls for consolidated parking to promote walking along the corridor, and for pedestrian improvements such as crosswalks, adequate sidewalks and lighting.

The plan also encourages mixed-use development along the corridor with attractive façades and signage. These policies have helped ensure that pedestrian improvements were made in the district and that the area remains a vital, walkable area.

Elementary school students crossing San Pablo Avenue on their way home from school.

E. Key Findings

This section explores the key factors that contribute to the area's success as a pedestrian district and factors that continue to create challenges.

San Pablo Avenue has a long history as a busy transportation and commercial corridor. Pedestrians from the surrounding neighborhoods use the corridor to access transit, businesses, schools, and other uses, and the corridor's specialty shops draw people from other parts of Berkeley and the region. The district has a long-established pedestrian infrastructure, including wide sidewalks, street trees, crosswalks, and median refuge islands, which all help to create a comfortable walking environment.

The following factors have the greatest impact on creating this pedestrian district:

- A diverse array of retailers that provide daily essentials and specialty items, drawing both local and regional visitors
- Wide sidewalks with mature street trees create a comfortable walking environment.

Wide sidewalks and mature street trees make an attractive pedestrians environment along San Pablo Avenue. Specialty shops including this salvage store draw regional traffic to the district.

- Pedestrian signals, crosswalks, and median refuge islands help pedestrians cross San Pablo Avenue, which is an 84-foot regional arterial.
- All-weather bus shelters with changeable message signs and bike racks are provided to encourage transit use.
- The mix of uses on the district, including housing above retail, reduces auto dependency and encourages walking.
- A diverse array of architectural styles and businesses add to the visual interest of the street.

While San Pablo Avenue currently draws steady pedestrian traffic and operates well as a pedestrian district. It could be enhanced by implementing the following few changes or improvements:

- Regular maintenance and sweeping would help to keep the area attractive and comfortable for pedestrians.
- The addition of bulbouts would help to shorten pedestrian crossing distances at key intersections along the San Pablo arterial.
- Pedestrian-scale lighting would further define the district.

- The addition of bicycle racks would invite more non-motorized transportation users to the district.
- Late night uses would help to improve pedestrian safety in the district.
- There are a number of vacancies along the corridor. Filling vacant storefronts would add to the mix of businesses that occupy the district and contribute to its overall success.

F. Pedestrian Environment and Facilities

The following section details the walking environment along San Pablo Avenue by describing the specific pedestrian facilities and the roadway characteristics.

Where commercial and transportation resources meet at the corner of San Pablo Avenue and University Avenue, pedestrian and bicycle activity is heavy throughout the day.

San Pablo Avenue

Type of Roadway:	Major Arterial
Roadway width:	84 feet
Speed Limit:	30 mph
Average Roadway Speeds:	30 –35 mph
Parking:	On street, horizontal, metered both sides
Sidewalk widths:	6 –12 feet

Pedestrian Facilities:

- Wide sidewalks
- Landscaped median
- Curb extensions
- Trash receptacles
- Bike parking
- Bus shelters
- Benches
- Street trees
- Crossing refuge islands
- Mid-block crossings

San Pablo Avenue is a wide four-lane road that carries large volumes of regional vehicle traffic. Although in many areas the road is uncomfortable for pedestrians, a landscaped median has been installed in the pedestrian district area to slow traffic and improve the walking environment. Along this portion of the street, smaller commercial establishments have awnings and often some landscaping to attract pedestrians. An abundance of metered, on-street parking on both sides of the street makes it easy for passers-by to stop and get out of their cars to visit shops. Pedestrian activity is moderate throughout the day, but peaks occur on weekends when many people come to the shops.

DOWNTOWN SAN JOSE

Typology: Major City Downtown
Location: San Jose, Santa Clara County
Size: An approximately 175-acre node of pedestrian activity, roughly 6 blocks long and 8 blocks deep

Downtown San Jose has a diverse mixture of uses.

A. District Boundaries and Location

The Downtown San Jose pedestrian district is generally bound by Santa Clara Street on the north, Viola Avenue and San Salvador Street on the south, San Jose State University and 6th Street on the east, and Almaden Boulevard on the west. Several museums and a major convention center are located within the downtown core area, and a strong relationship exists between downtown and the San Jose State University campus to the east.

B. Key District Components

Figure3-7 shows the Downtown San Jose pedestrian district, including boundaries, primary paths of pedestrian travel, the location of major attractors and major transit stops, which is discussed in more detail below.

I. Built Environment

The diverse mix of uses in downtown San Jose are typical of most major downtown areas, and are contained within buildings ranging from 3 to 20 stories tall. Major office, retail, hotel, convention, cultural and tourist uses exist within the district. A new 530,000 square foot City Hall complex with an 18-story tower has recently been completed in the northeast portion of the district. In addition, a large amount of residential development has been constructed in recent years. A central feature of downtown San Jose is the Plaza de Cesar Chavez, a two-block long oval-shaped park that is heavily used by downtown visitors, employees and residents.

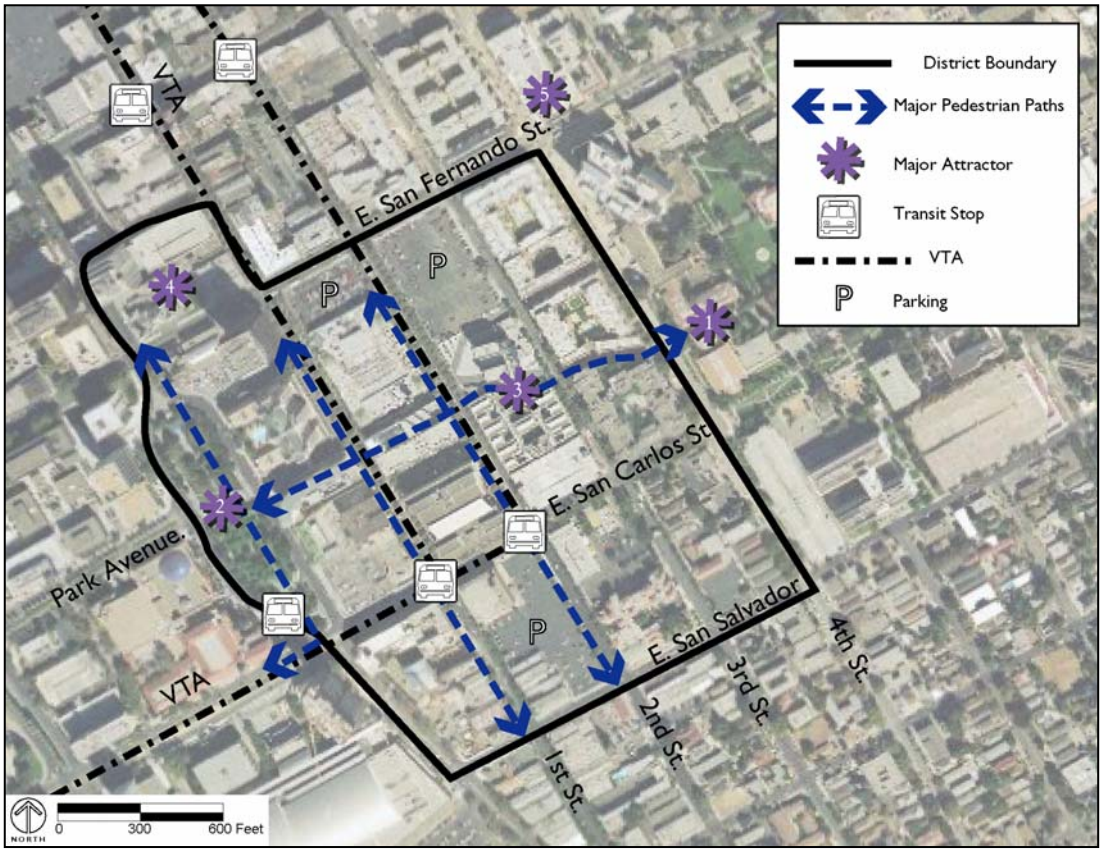


Figure 3-7: Downtown San Jose Pedestrian District.

2. Major Attractors

The density and intensity of uses in downtown San Jose, and in fact of most major downtown cities, generate a tremendous amount of pedestrian activity. The most notable pedestrian attractors are shown in Figure 3-7 as numbered below:

1. San Jose State University, which has strong pedestrian connection with the downtown
2. The Plaza de Cesar Chavez, the most prominent and heavily used public open space in downtown San Jose
3. The McEnry Convention Center, regularly utilized by major conventions
4. The new San Jose City Hall, which generates significant employee and visitor pedestrian traffic

Multiple travel modes interface on 1st and 2nd Streets in downtown San Jose (left). Plaza de Cesar Chavez fountains looking toward the Paseo de San Antonio (right).

The combined rail-bus stops on 1st and 2nd Streets at Santa Clara Street and the Paseo de San Antonio, as well as at the Convention Center, could also be considered major pedestrian attractors. Multiple parking garages (both public and private) exist on most downtown blocks.

3. Transit Service

Downtown San Jose is bisected by numerous bus lines, as well as by two VTA light rail routes. Light rail and dedicated bus lanes exist on 1st and 2nd Streets, making these two corridors the most transit-intensive in the downtown area. Headways on the numerous bus lines and VTA light rail generally range between 15 and 20 minutes on weekdays. The light rail line and many bus routes shift to an east-west alignment along San Carlos Street on the south side of the downtown core. Though located outside of the area considered to be the downtown pedestrian district, the downtown San Jose train station is located approximately one-half mile to the west, and is served by Amtrak, ACE, light rail and Caltrain. DASH shuttles circulate between downtown and the train station on weekdays.

Future BART service to San Jose is proposed to include a station underneath Santa Clara Street, spanning the 3-block segment between Market and 2nd Streets.

New residential uses within the downtown district. These townhouses are designed with front stoops, in part to encourage interaction between residents and passers-bys.

4. Pedestrian Paths of Travel

All streets within downtown San Jose experience a notable amount of pedestrian traffic, though the most heavily-used routes are shown in Figure 3-7. The pedestrian-oriented, linear transit malls along 1st and 2nd Streets experience heavy pedestrian traffic throughout the day. The Paseo de San Antonio is a four-block long pedestrian paseo that links San Jose State University, major transit stops on 1st and 2nd Streets, and the Plaza de Cesar Chavez, creating the most important and heavily used downtown east-west pedestrian linkage. South Market Street, which splits around both sides of the Plaza de Cesar Chavez and connects the northern downtown area to the convention center, is also an important pedestrian corridor. Finally, East San Fernando Street is a primary pedestrian route that connects the downtown core to the new City Hall.

C. Planning History

Downtown San Jose has developed over more than 150 years and has an extremely diverse mixture of historic and modern uses. Redevelopment efforts in the past two decades have transformed the downtown area into a cultural and civic center with vibrant, pedestrian-oriented streets and a heavy emphasis on transit. The current downtown area began to grow in the mid 1800s. Although downtown San Jose has undergone numerous transformations over the past century and a half, many of the innovative streetscape and pedestrian improvements seen in San Jose today have been constructed in the past 20 years. VTA light rail service and associated streetscape improvements were completed in 1988 and were a catalyst to pedestrian-oriented downtown improvements.

Challenges to achieving a pedestrian-oriented downtown included a lack of residential and visitor uses, leading to a deserted downtown on evenings and weekends, and a prevalence of surface parking lots and uninviting streetscapes. The City's redevelopment efforts have since included a significant

amount of residential and mixed-use infill downtown, as well as construction of the Tech Museum, a major convention facility and associated hotels.

An innovative parking program implemented by the City provides uniform signage and real-time demand data to users among both public and private parking facilities. The parking program also makes use of the DASH shuttle system to transport users between downtown and the Diridon train station, where lower-cost parking areas are provided. By implementing such parking innovations, the City allowed increased development to take place downtown, helping to create a denser center with increased pedestrian activity.

City-operated shuttles transport downtown visitors and employees to shared parking facilities.

In addition to facilitating land use changes in the downtown core, the San Jose Redevelopment Agency has implemented numerous streetscape projects that have significantly improved the pedestrian experience and pedestrian circulation. The *San Jose Downtown Streetscape Master Plan* was prepared in 2003 and provides a blueprint for future streetscape and pedestrian improvements.

D. Regulatory Framework

In 2004, the City of San Jose adopted a set of broad-sweeping regulatory changes for downtown in 2004. These are referred to as the *San Jose Greater Downtown Strategy for Development: Strategy 2000* and include adoption of a new downtown zoning ordinance, a comprehensive rezoning of the downtown area, and a set of downtown design guidelines. An EIR will be prepared for the *Strategy 2000 Plan*, providing project-level environmental review for most major developments and projects. Implementation of the strategic plan and adoption of the EIR will significantly streamline the development process for both public and private projects in downtown San Jose.

The strategic plan also includes an implementation strategy aimed at constructing the many downtown infrastructure (including streetscape) improvements that have been included in adopted plans over the years. The

The 2003 Downtown Streetscape Master Plan (left) provides the regulatory framework for encouraging pedestrian activity in the downtown. School groups often gather on the grass in the Plaza de Cesar Chavez (right).

process will allow developers to know what specific improvements they will be required to construct, and establish a mechanism to apportion the costs of major projects. If successful, this comprehensive approach will result in improvements such as those shown in the *Downtown Streetscape Master Plan* to be constructed, rather than just remain in plan form as "wish list" items.

E. Key Findings

As indicated above, numerous streetscape improvements have been constructed in downtown San Jose in the past 20 years. While it is impossible to describe all of the improvements, this section describes changes that appear to have been particularly effective and those that need improvement to serve the district.

The following factors have the greatest impact on creating this pedestrian district:

- 1st and 2nd Street transit corridors create a pedestrian-oriented environment that still accommodates multiple modes of travel, including automobiles, making the streets more vibrant than other unsuccessful transit malls around the country.
- The use of street trees and arcades create a pleasant walking environment on a year-round basis.
- The Paseo de San Antonio links several major pedestrian destinations, creating a heavily-used, vehicle-free pedestrian corridor that supports lively public spaces and small retail and café uses.
- Pedestrian way-finding signs are located throughout the downtown area, creating an easily-navigable area that encourages visitors and tourists to explore downtown on foot.
- Plentiful seating areas including benches, low walls and public art are used a great deal, and reinforce the pedestrian-oriented nature of downtown streets.
- The Plaza de Cesar Chavez includes bountiful pedestrian amenities ranging from attractive public restrooms to an interactive fountain that is popular with children on warm days. The plaza serves as both a pedestrian destination and a pedestrian route between major downtown attractors.
- The City's downtown planning efforts have prioritized pedestrian improvements and the Downtown Streetscape Master Plan outlines specific steps for implementing improvements.

The travel lane configuration on 1st Street give priority to pedestrians over vehicle traffic.

While the district currently operates well as a pedestrian district, the following issues negatively impact the pedestrian environment:

- Large numbers of newspaper racks block pedestrian mobility at some locations.
- Some surface parking lots remain, which create less attractive breaks in the streetscape environment and discourage pedestrians from walking.
- The unsignalized crossings of Paseo de San Antonio at 1st and 2nd Streets are not easily seen by motorists and could benefit from higher-visibility crosswalks.
- Several downtown buildings, including the north side of the Tech Museum on Park Avenue, have blank unarticulated facades that create a less interesting pedestrian walking environment.
- Many pedestrian crossings lack bulb-outs where they could feasibly be constructed. Bulb-outs would help reduce pedestrian crossing distances, increase pedestrian visibility to drivers and slow the speeds of turning traffic.

F. Pedestrian Environment and Facilities

The following section describes the pedestrian environment in detail by focusing on the primary paths of travel in the district. The size of the roadway, pedestrian space and pedestrian facilities are described.

1. 1st and 2nd Streets

Type of Roadway: Local - Transit Mall
Roadway Width: 25 feet (excluding rail area)
Speed Limit: 25 mph
Average Roadway Speeds: 20 mph
Parking: none
Sidewalk Widths: 10 to 12 feet (excluding rail area)

Pedestrian Facilities:

- 10- to 12-foot sidewalks
- Street trees
- Benches
- Pedestrian-scale lighting
- Informational transit kiosks with downtown maps
- Transit shelters
- Double-sized (20-foot wide) crosswalks

Low vehicle speeds and reduced crossing distances provide comfort for pedestrians crossing 2nd Street.

1st and 2nd Streets are one-way couplets (1st Street northbound, 2nd Street southbound) that include VTA light rail, a dedicated bus lane and one lane of vehicular traffic. A significant amount of space is dedicated to pedestrians, including a 10-foot wide island between light rail tracks and the street that accommodates all transit stops and waiting areas. The vehicular portions of the street are only 25-feet wide, including one exclusive bus lane, resulting in very short pedestrian crossing distances. Pedestrians appear to feel comfortable crossing the streets at both designated and unmarked locations. The Paseo de San Antonio crosses 1st and 2nd Streets at unsignalized marked crosswalks that are 20 feet and include three stripes, the first of which tends to function as a "stop line" for vehicular traffic. Both 1st and 2nd Streets are lined by a diverse mixture of new and old buildings, many of which have ground-floor retail uses. The prevalence of street trees, street furniture, pedestrian-scale architecture and the sheer number of pedestrians using the streets make them attractive and functional pedestrian environments.

Retail use on the Paseo de San Antonio draws steady pedestrian activity during the week, with larger volumes on weekends.

The Paseo de San Antonio, with its sidewalk cafés, is a pedestrian-only thoroughfare.

2. *Paseo de San Antonio*

Type of Roadway:	Pedestrian Paseo
Roadway Width:	N/A
Speed Limit:	N/A
Average Roadway Speeds:	N/A
Parking:	N/A
Sidewalk Widths:	Variable

Pedestrian Facilities:

- Paseo restricted to pedestrian traffic
- Decorative paving
- Pedestrian-scale lighting
- Ample seating areas
- Sidewalk cafés
- Bollards at intersections with streets
- Public art

The Paseo de San Antonio extends for four blocks between San Jose State University and the Plaza de Cesar Chavez, forming a major downtown east-west pedestrian corridor that connects several major pedestrian attractors. The pedestrian-only street passes between buildings where public and private spaces seamlessly integrate. The presence of retail uses, sidewalk cafés, pedestrian-scale amenities such as lighting and art, and abundant seating make the paseo both a transportation link and a heavily-used public open space.

3. South Market Street

Type of Roadway: Arterial
Roadway Width: 52 feet
Speed Limit: 25 mph
Average Roadway Speeds: 20 to 30 mph
Parking: Both sides
Sidewalk Widths: 12 to 20 feet

Pedestrian Facilities:

- Wide sidewalks with some arcades
- Street trees
- Adjacent to park (Plaza de Cesar Chavez)
- Audible crossing cues at signalized intersections
- Pedestrian-scale guide signs to attractions
- 20-foot wide crosswalks at Paseo de San Antonio

Wide sidewalks, decorative paving and an arcade along Market Street all contribute to the pedestrian environment.

South Market Street splits into two one-way streets around the Plaza de Cesar Chavez. Sidewalks range between 12 and 15 feet wide on the "non-park" side of the street, with 14- to 20-feet wide sidewalks alongside the park. Several buildings along the street include pedestrian arcades that provide protection from sun and rain. Most pedestrian crossings take place at signalized intersections, including a signalized midblock crossing at the Paseo de San Antonio.

Pedestrian crossing on Market Street into the Plaza de Cesar Chavez.

There is great architectural diversity among buildings along South Market Street, ranging from the historic San Jose Museum of Art building to the ultra-modern Tech Museum. The diversity in architecture and uses, combined with the presence of the very active Plaza de Cesar Chavez and other major pedestrian attractors, makes South Market Street a popular pedestrian route.

DOWNTOWN SANTA ROSA

Typology: Medium Sized City - Downtown
Location: Santa Rosa, Sonoma County
Size: Approximately 80 acres, or roughly 5 blocks long and 5 blocks deep

The 2nd Street Transit Mall is a hub of pedestrian activity in the Downtown District.

A. District Boundaries and Location

Santa Rosa's Downtown district covers approximately 20 blocks and is bounded by 7th Street on the north, Sonoma Avenue on the south, E Street on the east and B Street on the west. Santa Rosa's downtown core is surrounded by US 101 to the west, and a mix of commercial corridors and traditional single family residential neighborhoods to north, south and east.

B. District Overview

Figure 3-8 details the district including its boundaries, primary paths of pedestrian travel, the location of major attractors and transit stops, as discussed further below.

I. Built Environment

Santa Rosa's downtown district has a physical character similar to that of other traditional northern California downtowns: it is compact, comprised of small walkable blocks, contains a mix of two- to five-story buildings with varying architecture, and has a variety of pedestrian-oriented features that give it a livable quality. Santa Rosa's downtown is a major center for civic, financial, cultural and office uses in the North Bay. The district is home to various local, regional, State, and federal offices. There are 11 City-operated parking lots dispersed throughout the district, consisting of five multi-storied parking structures and six lots of varying sizes. Santa Rosa Plaza, a regional indoor shopping mall that spans several blocks, dominates the western end of

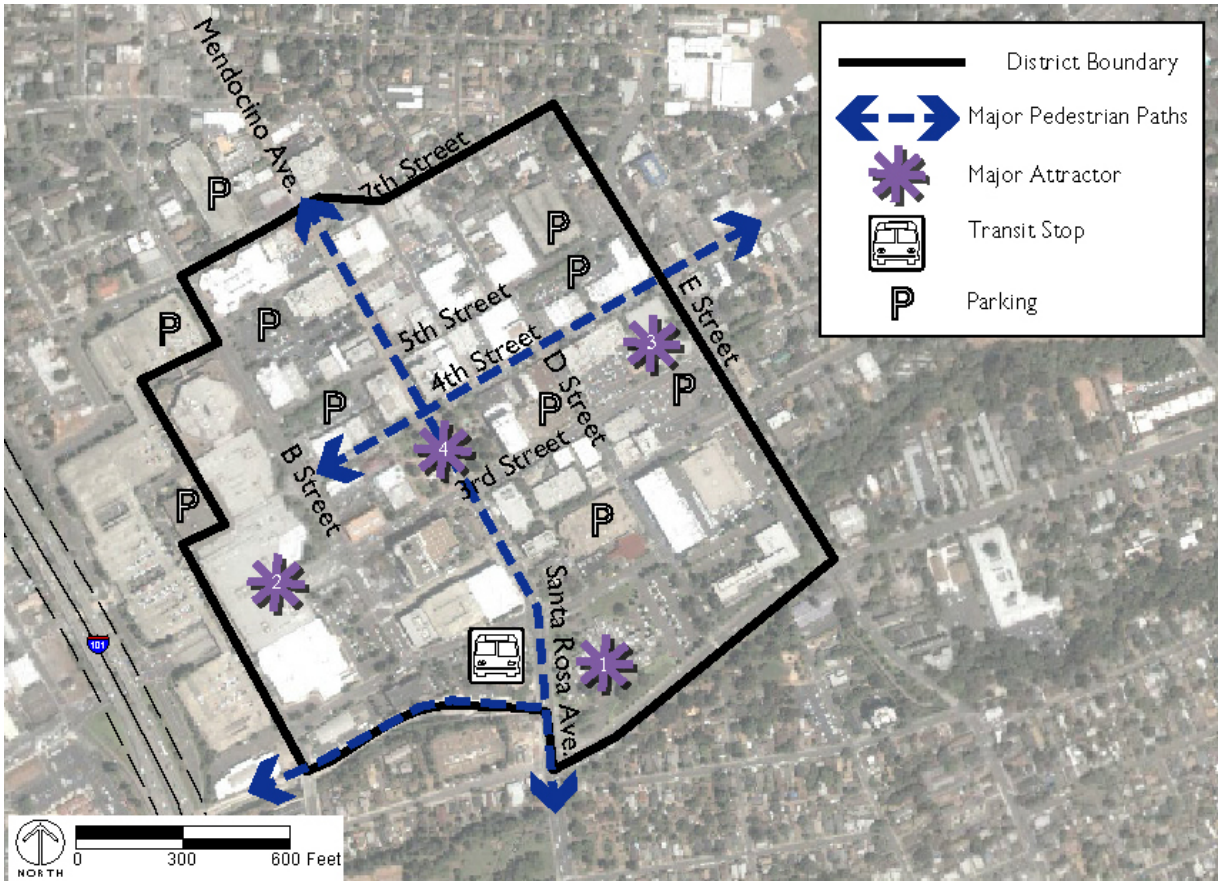


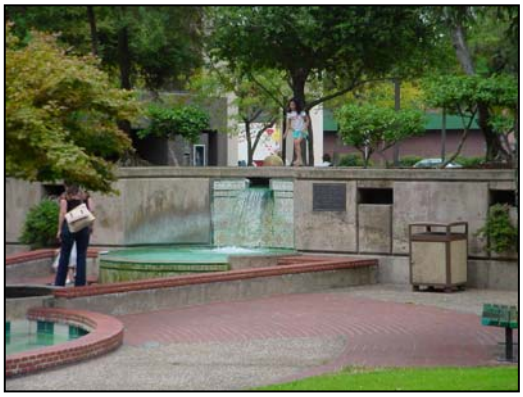
Figure 3-8: Santa Rosa Downtown Pedestrian District

the district. Santa Rosa City Hall anchors the southern end of the district and Courthouse Square, a heavily used public plaza, straddles both sides of Mendocino Avenue in the center of the district.

2. Major Attractors

Major attractors of pedestrian activity in the downtown district are shown on Figure 3-8 and numbered as follows:

1. Santa Rosa City Hall, which anchors the south end of the district
2. Santa Rosa Plaza, a Regional Shopping Mall on the western edge of the district, which attracts many visitors to the area from the city and region.



Wide sidewalks and pedestrian features (left) invite foot traffic along Old Courthouse Square. Families enjoy the water features in Old Courthouse Square (right).

3. The Sonoma County Library, Central Branch is located at the eastern edge of the district on 3rd and E Streets.
4. Courthouse Square is located between 3rd and 4th Streets on Mendocino Avenue, in the center of the district. The Square is split by Mendocino Avenue and contains a variety of traditional features, including variations in topography, water elements, public art, seating areas, lawns and an amphitheatre.

3. Transit Service

Transit in the downtown district is provided via fixed-route bus service. While routes operate on Mendocino Avenue and several other local streets, most boardings take place at the 2nd Street Transit Mall, which encompasses a full city block between Mendocino Avenue and B Street. Closed to auto traffic, the Transit Mall is serviced by five transit agencies: Santa Rosa City Bus, Sonoma County Transit, Golden Gate Transit, Mendocino Transit and Vine Transit. Headways generally range between 15 to 30 minutes, with somewhat longer headways for inter-regional service. The transit mall includes an information kiosk, all-weather seating areas, bicycle parking, restrooms and water fountains. The facility is centrally located to most uses within the downtown core and experiences sustained pedestrian traffic throughout the day, with spikes of activity during peak commute periods.

The 2nd Street Transit Mall encompasses a full city block, is closed to automobile traffic and contains many pedestrian amenities.

Conceptual streetscape improvements on Mendocino Avenue as identified in the 2004 Courthouse Square Area Land Use Concept, Traffic and Transit Circulation Feasibility Study.

4. Pedestrian Paths of Travel

Pedestrian activity is present throughout the day in Santa Rosa's downtown district with spikes of activity during the lunch hour and early evening. Sidewalks are found on each street, and a number of alleyways and pedestrian connections exist to facilitate pedestrian travel between destinations. The primary paths of pedestrian travel through the district are on 4th Street and Mendocino Avenue. 4th Street, between B and E Streets, is the focal point of pedestrian activity in downtown Santa Rosa. The Santa Rosa Creek Prince Memorial Greenway, once a concrete flood control channel, is now a popular greenway extending west along the southern boundary of the district from Santa Rosa Avenue.

C. Planning History

Santa Rosa's downtown district has served as Sonoma County's commercial, administrative and cultural hub for over a century. Several notable changes have occurred through the 20th century that have affected its physical form. First, US 101 was constructed through Santa Rosa in the 1950's, dividing the downtown district into two halves: downtown (Courthouse Square) on the east and Railroad Square on the west. Second, seismic damage led to the removal of the old courthouse in the late 1960s, and a 4-lane connector between Mendocino and Santa Rosa Avenues was introduced through the center of the square where the old Courthouse had previously stood. Next, Santa Rosa Plaza, a regional shopping mall that occupies roughly six city blocks, was developed along the western edge of the district in the 1970s, defining the district's western edge and further separating downtown from Railroad Square. Finally, like so many other communities around the State and nation, the growth of other major retail areas outside of the downtown have added pressure to the district's ability to remain competitive and its business vitality has somewhat declined.

Public art exhibits enrich the downtown district's pedestrian environment (left). A themed information kiosk provides visitors information about the public art exhibit and downtown attractions (right).

Several planning efforts are underway to improve the pedestrian environment in the downtown district, including studies to address re-unifying Courthouse Square, improve pedestrian linkages between the downtown district and the nearby Railroad Square District, and to improve the pedestrian environment and circulation around the Santa Rosa Plaza.

D. Regulatory Framework

Suburban development throughout Sonoma County over the past several decades has challenged the economic viability of the downtown district. The City has been working to combat these forces with a focused effort on restoring the downtown district's economic vitality and pedestrian environment. These efforts are supported in the City's regulatory framework including:

- A main goal of the 2002 General Plan is to maintain downtown as the major regional office, financial, civic and cultural center in the North Bay, and a vital mixed use center (LUL-C).
- Nearly the entire district falls under the C-2 General Commercial Zoning District and has a General Plan designation of Retail & Business Services.

Paving treatments, pedestrian signals, and audible crossing aids enhance the crosswalks in the Downtown District.

A mix of elements invites pedestrians to the 4th Street Retail District.

E. Key Findings

This section explores the key factors that contribute to the area's success as a pedestrian district and factors that continue to create challenges.

Numerous improvements have been made in the downtown district over the years to make the area a more vibrant pedestrian and economic environment. These improvements include upgraded pedestrian facilities, higher density land use designations, transit projects, and policy and ordinance changes to support the vitality of the district. This section describes those changes that have been effective and those that need improvement to serve the district.

The following factors have the greatest impact on creating this pedestrian district:

- The district contains a good mix of local retailers and restaurants that are geared towards pedestrians.
- The use of bollards, street trees and planters on local streets help to buffer the pedestrian environment from vehicle traffic.
- Crossing enhancements, including paving treatments, pedestrian actuated signals and audible crossing aids, exist.
- Public art and monuments create an interesting pedestrian environment.
- The weekly downtown farmers market and street fair closes 4th Street to vehicle traffic, creating a pedestrian mall. The summertime market draws thousands of pedestrians to the downtown district.

- Consolidated public parking structures dispersed throughout the district provide convenient parking, facilitating pedestrian activity and minimizing the number of surface parking lots.

- Courthouse Square contains a variety of pedestrian-oriented features that draw casual users into the public plaza, and also serves as a destination of its own.

Sidewalk cafes on 4th Street invite pedestrians to sit and enjoy the downtown district.

While the downtown currently operates well as a pedestrian district, the following issues impact the pedestrian environment in the downtown district:

- Arterial thoroughfares and the Santa Rosa Plaza act as barriers to pedestrian travel.
- Pedestrian travel along Mendocino Avenue is impeded in places by narrow sidewalks and obstructions.
- Several locations in the district lack storefronts, window displays and other items of interest to pedestrians.
- The Santa Rosa Plaza shopping mall forms a barrier between the downtown pedestrian district and neighboring Railroad Square historic district.
- Courthouse Square, the community's central public plaza, is severed by a major arterial.

F. Pedestrian Environment and Facilities

The following section describes the pedestrian environment in detail by focusing on the primary paths of travel in the pedestrian district, including the size of the roadway and the pedestrian facilities on each pedestrian path.

Pedestrian activity at the intersection of the two primary pedestrian routes: Mendocino Avenue and 4th Street.

The Prince Memorial Greenway, part of the County's regional trail system connects pedestrians under US 101 between Santa Rosa's Downtown and Railroad Square districts.

1. 4th Street

Type of Roadway:	Local Street
Roadway width:	48 feet
Speed Limit:	25 mph posted
Average Roadway Speeds:	20 –30 mph
Parking:	Diagonal and parallel both sides, metered
Sidewalk widths:	12-20 feet

Pedestrian Facilities:

- Wide sidewalks with decorative paving
- Street trees
- Bollards
- Sidewalk dining
- Public art
- Pedestrian-scale signs
- Decorative light standards
- Crosswalk paving treatments
- Audible pedestrian crossing aids
- Bike racks

4th Street, between B and E Streets, is the focal point of pedestrian activity in downtown Santa Rosa. Framed by two- to four-story buildings that house ground-floor retailers and a variety of upper-level uses, this two-lane east-west route runs through the center of the district and connects several major attractors. Wide sidewalks, outdoor dining and numerous independent storefronts invite local and regional pedestrian activity. A mixture of diagonal and parallel parking effectively narrows the travel lanes and reduces traffic speeds; bollards, street trees, planters and bicycle parking help to further buffer the pedestrian environment from the street.

2. *Mendocino Avenue*

Type of Roadway: Arterial
Roadway Width: 50 feet
Speed Limit: 30 mph
Average Roadway Speeds: 30-35 mph
Parking: Intermittent
Sidewalk Widths: 10 feet

Pedestrian Facilities:

- Street trees
- Crosswalk paving treatments
- Audible pedestrian crossing aids

Pedestrian features are scaled back on Mendocino Avenue because of the roadway's regional arterial designation.

Mendocino Avenue is the main north-south arterial roadway through downtown Santa Rosa. It carries significant volumes of through traffic headed north to destinations like the Santa Rosa Junior College, County Government Complex and medical campuses, and south to the City's main commercial strip. While traffic-calming measures are in place to slow traffic on Mendocino Avenue through the downtown district, there is a distinct difference in feel, traffic volumes and pedestrian amenities provided on this arterial than as the local streets in the district.

Several pedestrian bridges span the creek providing neighborhood connections and various monuments and creek overlooks create points of pedestrian interest.

3. Prince Memorial Greenway

Type of Roadway:	Pedestrian Promenade
Width:	N/A
Speed Limit:	N/A
Average Roadway Speeds:	N/A
Parking:	N/A
Sidewalk widths:	10 feet

Pedestrian Facilities:

- Decorative concrete paving surfaces
- Benches/seating
- Decorative pedestrian lighting
- Decorative masonry work and iron railings
- Public spaces and creek overlooks
- Extensive landscaping
- Public art
- Monuments

Pedestrians and bicyclists use the Prince Memorial Greenway to connect between Santa Rosa's Downtown and Railroad Square districts. The greenway incorporates 10-foot pedestrian and bicycle pathways along Santa Rosa Creek. Use is consistent throughout the day. Pedestrians enjoy monuments, benches, creek overlooks, interpretive opportunities and neighborhood connections.